

with the Holy Ghost by a gift from God without human touch or agency, etc.

No, but as soon as Ananias understood what the Lord would have him do, he "went his way and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee as thou camest, hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received his sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." We see clearly that the laying on of hands in this case was not a mere human arrangement but of divine appointment, and when properly attended to the promised blessing was bestowed. This is always the case. The power is in God; the blessing is his gift; but it is truly right, becoming, and a duty in both minister and candidate to exercise confidence in the wisdom of God and to comply with his appointments. The same may be said of the ordinances of baptism, the communion, etc.

(To be continued.)

WORKING WITH DULL TOOLS.

W. M. LYON.

If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct. Eccles. 10: 10.

A good missionary text the wise man gives us. Most of us know more or less about the working with dull tools. It does n't pay to work that way. Why? 1. It is a waste of effort and strength. That is what Solomon says, and we can say amen. God does not want us to waste strength on dull tools. He wants us to "whet the edge"—keep it sharp.

Moreover, he purposes to use us as instruments—"tools." To be used as a "tool," according to the common phrase is to be under the complete control by another power. Applied to man in the natural way it makes slaves, it degrades; but to be a "tool" for God—to be completely in his hands, is to fulfill the highest and noblest mission of life.

Brother, sister, are you trying to work with a blunt-edged tool? If so, learn that you are not yet entirely in his hands: "Because as he is, so are we in this world." 1 John 4: 17.

No dull tool can do perfect work. Talk about perfection; we only know perfection as we know him, and we know him when 1 John 2: 3 is fulfilled in us.

Not to know him is to wear our lives out trying to work with a blunt tool; without him we can do nothing; (Jno. 15: 5;) with him, we can do "all things". Philip. 4: 13.

Not to know this secret is to be as those smitten with blindness in their rage

to capture one of God's "hidden ones;" "they wearied themselves to find the door." Gen. 19: 11.

Unless he is in us, the hope of glory, (Col. 1: 27) we grope in blindness at the door of life eternal.

2. To work with a dull tool is to bring reproach upon God's cause. Every imperfect instrument when used leaves its mark of imperfection. A dull ax not only causes the chopper to exert more strength, but it scars its way through; a dull scythe leaves its own mark.

Beloved, when we glance over the field today what do we see? Have we been working with sharp-edged tools? or has the iron been blunt, much of strength expended and little accomplished?

The great harvest is upon us. Dull sickles let us not have. Let us be "workmen that needeth not be ashamed."

Brethren, already a great and glorious work has been done, but today do we not all realize that we are not measuring up to our responsibilities?

When the sharp, keen edge of God's holy spirit be found on us as a church, what a wonderful work may be done. No trouble then to open and sustain missions both at home and abroad.

When the iron is blunt, oh, what an effort it requires to do a little. Sharpen the blunt iron, and the rusted blade and our church treasures would not get empty, money raising would become almost a spiritual luxury, and questionable methods and doubtful expediences would not be known. O, let us fervently look to him that we may not work foolishly.

And we need to possess the keen edge of the spirit not only for missionary work, but we need it in every kind of work. We need it in the prayer meeting, in our testimonies and in every other service.

To labor with a blunt iron causes others to feel badly, too. It is a pleasure to witness a good workman work with perfect tools. How many meetings have been almost spoiled by some awkward workman trying to use a dull instrument. No use trying to tell an "experience" that has never been; there is quite a difference between experiencing and experimenting.

Perhaps we have all heard the story of the poor fellow who combed his hair but once a week and said that it "pulls bad enough then." This is not without its spiritual counterpart.

But it is not enough simply to "whet up," and then lay the instrument aside in some safe place to be used in case of necessity. Many there are of that class. Yes, they are sharp, (?) but they want to keep from getting dull, so they put aside their precious instrument with the under-

standing that it is to be used only in case of great emergency.

They criticise those who are exerting their strength trying to use a dull tool, and say, "Well if I could n't do better than that, I would n't do anything,"—and so they do nothing.

We read of such in Matt. 25: 25. When the Lord comes perhaps they expect to say, "Here's my instrument in perfect condition." They forget that the sickle was to be "thrust in." Rev. 14: 15. When the Master comes to reckon he will not say: "Let me see your sickle." It is the reaping he wants to be done.

What God wants us to do then is not simply to be at work with sharpened tool in the harvest of the earth, but to look to him for wisdom to direct.

Without this all of our work is unprofitable. So let us be encouraged. He will not only take away the bluntness of the iron and give us the keen edge with which to work, but he has promised to grant wisdom to direct us. Having all these let us put our hands to the plough and not look back. The time is short. Let not our sun go down until we can truthfully say, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

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CONVERSION.

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"No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day." St. John 6: 44.

There have been many wonderful conversions, but probably the most important of them all, in spiritual results, was the conversion of Saul of Tarsus.

Little did the sorrowing disciples who buried the body of Stephen dream that one of the prominent men connected with his martyrdom would soon be a follower of Christ. There was no indication of this result, for Saul became more and more bitter and persecuted the Christians relentlessly. But Christ was planning to arrest this leader of the forces opposed to his disciples. In the crisis of a battle the capture of the commander of an army may bring defeat to that army and victory to the captors.

The conduct of Stephen and the other martyrs of the early Christian church must have made a deep impression on Saul. There is reason for the opinion that he was troubled in regard to what he was doing and tried to drown the whispers of conscience and of the Holy Spirit by plunging yet deeper into persecution. Christ's words indicate that Saul had been fighting against conviction. Do not be discouraged by such conduct. It is often